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New Technology for New Beginnings

Sri Lanka's Northern Farmers Learn Skills to Improve Production and Marketing



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Society Members receive practical training at the CIC Institute of Agri Business Pelwehera Farm located in Dambulla.

Farmers from Vavuniya North travelled south for the first time in two decades to participate in an exposure visit with the CIC (the leading agriculture company of Sri Lanka and a USAID public private alliance participant), bringing home new technology and new found hope as part of an OTI intervention to stabilize the economy and restart livelihoods.

Telling Our Story

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December 2010 - For the first time in two decades, farmers from Sri Lanka's war-torn north visited their counterparts in central and southern areas of the country to learn new production technologies. Twenty farmers from Vavuniya North participated in an exposure visit to farms outside the northern region in Dambulla and Hingurakgoda through USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI).

Over the last twenty years, these farmers have suffered multiple displacements due to the ethnic conflict. Recently returned to their places of origin, most farmers in the north have lost all of their assets. This OTI program helped to increase these farmers' access to new technologies practiced in other areas of the country and to support the overall economic stability of the Vavuniya North Farmers' Society through improved market linkages.

For the majority of the farmers who participated in the exposure visit to the CIC Pelwehera Farm in Dambulla and to the CIC training center in Hingurakgoda, it was the first time they had ever travelled outside of the Northern Province and the first time they had ever been to an integrated farm.

CIC, a leverage partner of the USAID's Dairy Enhancement Project in the Eastern Province, provided theoretical and practical training sessions on subjects such as organic fertilizers, soil testing and improvements, seed quality testing, new technology in agricultural equipment, and drip irrigation systems.

In years prior to the conflict, farmers in Vavuniya produced the majority of highland crops in the north. Now, after this visit and the link established with the CIC, these farmers have gained new skills and renewed hope for a profitable future through the better connections with national markets and exposure to labor saving technologies.

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